Victorian Studies Association Newsletter



NUMBER 28, FALL 1981

Ontario, Canada

THE VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Number 28, Fall, 1981 Ontario, Canada

Edited for the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario

Editor: Bruce Kinzer, Department of History, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

Please send submissions to the editor
c/o Mill Project, 27 Birge-Carnegie Library,
Victoria College, University of Toronto,
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1K7

C O N T E N T S

Editorial	5
Forthcoming	5
News of Members	5
Report: 1981 VSA Conference	7
Broad Church Reactions to the Mansel Controversy	9
Book Review	
Thomas De Quincey: The Prose of Vision	22

EDITORIAL

The editor would once again like to refer, briefly, to the somewhat unorthodox arrangements under which the *Newsletter* is published. At the Toronto end, the facilities of the Mill Project at Victoria College and the unsurpassed typing skills of Rea Wilmshurst, together with the English office at Victoria College, which is responsible for the distribution of the *Newsletter*, are key components of this arrangement. No less important are the production services very generously provided by Allan Austin and the University of Guelph. To these individuals and institutions the editor would like to express his gratitude.

For the masterful visual accompaniment to the report on the 1981 VSA Conference, we are indebted to Brian Parker of the University of Toronto.

FORTHCOMING

The 1981 Victorian Studies Association of Ontario Annual Conference will be held at Glendon College, Toronto, on Saturday, 17 April. Guest speakers will be Mark Girouard, author of *The Victorian Country House* and a recently published book entitled *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, and Michael Millgate, who has written extensively on Faulkner and Hardy, and who is co-editor of *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

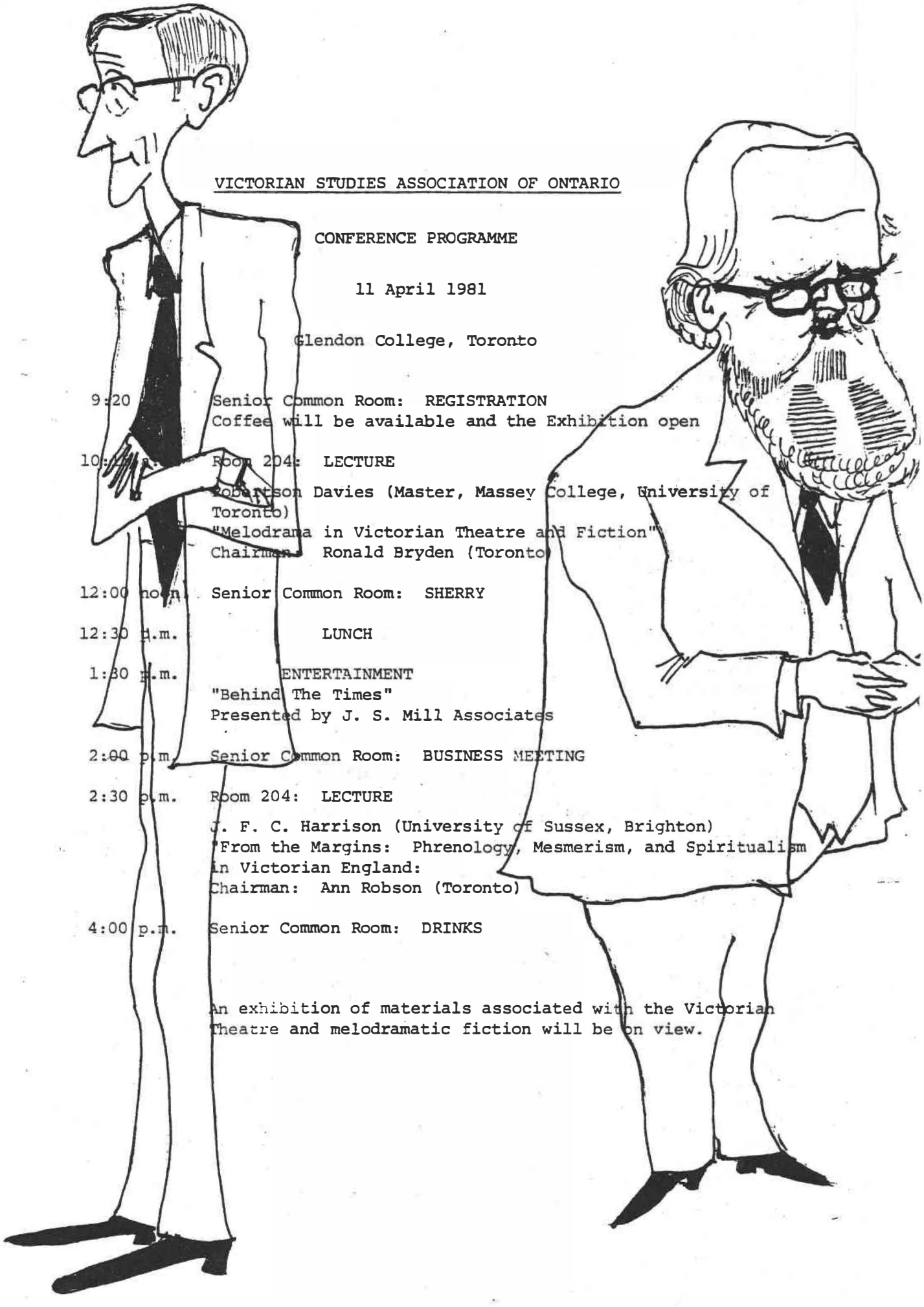
Desmond Hawkins, Pauline Wynn, and Douglas Leach presented "An Evening with Thomas Hardy" at SUNY College, Fredonia, on October 4th and at SUNY College, Brockport, on October 7th.

W. J. Keith (English, University of Toronto) has published "The Land in Victorian Literature" in *The Victorian Countryside*, ed. G. E. Mingay, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), I, 136-49.

C. T. McIntire (Institute for Christian Studies, University of Toronto) has recently returned from India where, assisted by a Research Grant from the SSHRC, he explored the theme of "Indian Views of History"; his article "Mid-Victorian Anti-Catholicism, British Diplomacy, and Odo Russell in Rome," appeared in *Fides et Historia*, 13 (1980), 23-33; his book, *England against the Papacy, 1858-1861*, will be published by Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Gary Paterson (Dept. of Modern Languages, King's College, London, Ont.) has had the following contributions published: "Spiritual Decadence? Some Religious Poetry of John Gray," *Antigonish Review*, 39 (Autumn 1979), 89-95; "Lord Alfred Douglas: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Him," *English Literature in Transition*, 23 (1980), 168-200; "Light and Darkness, Sound and Silence in Lionel Johnson's Poetry," *Antigonish Review*, 45 (Spring 1981), 93-103.

David Shaw (English, University of Toronto) has during the past year published essays on the poetic theories of Ruskin, Mill, Browning, and other Victorians in the following journals: *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* (Spring 1981); *Browning Institute Studies* (Autumn 1980); *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* (Spring 1981); and *New Literary History* (Spring 1981).



VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

11 April 1981

Glendon College, Toronto

9:20 Senior Common Room: REGISTRATION
Coffee will be available and the Exhibition open

10:[illegible] Room 204: LECTURE
Robertson Davies (Master, Massey College, University of Toronto)
"Melodrama in Victorian Theatre and Fiction"
Chairman: Ronald Bryden (Toronto)

12:00 noon Senior Common Room: SHERRY

12:30 p.m. LUNCH

1:30 p.m. ENTERTAINMENT
"Behind The Times"
Presented by J. S. Mill Associates

2:00 p.m. Senior Common Room: BUSINESS MEETING

2:30 p.m. Room 204: LECTURE
J. F. C. Harrison (University of Sussex, Brighton)
"From the Margins: Phrenology, Mesmerism, and Spiritualism in Victorian England:
Chairman: Ann Robson (Toronto)

4:00 p.m. Senior Common Room: DRINKS

An exhibition of materials associated with the Victorian Theatre and melodramatic fiction will be on view.

REPORT

1981 VSA CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference of the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario was held at York University's Glendon College, Toronto, on 11 April 1981, with nearly one hundred members in attendance. The programme that attracted this substantial gathering featured two papers. The first, entitled "Melodrama in Victorian Theatre and Fiction," was given by Professor Robertson Davies of Massey College, University of Toronto. The second, entitled "From the Margins: Phrenology, Mesmerism, and Spiritualism in Victorian England," was given by Professor J.F.C. Harrison of the University of Sussex.

Professor Davies covered much ground in a remarkably effective display of the ways in which melodrama pervaded not only various forms of Victorian entertainment, but the very texture of Victorian life. Indeed, according to Professor Davies, melodrama was "a way of looking at life," and there was much in the life of the Victorians to make melodrama, whether in the Victorian novel or on the Victorian stage, a legitimate artistic expression of contemporary culture, values, and aspirations. Professor Davies identified the elements of theatrical melodrama, in which the text mattered far less than the spectacle. Of particular importance was the music, an integral part of the performance. Together with the speech and gesture of the actors, the music helped breathe life and meaning into the text. Relevant to an understanding of the role of exaggerated diction and gesture is the diverse social character of the Victorian audience and the frequently chaotic circumstances confronting the performers. To capture such an audience required melodramatic presentation. Professor Davies also argued that melodrama served as a school of morality in which poetic justice was done and seen to be done; here, at least, the virtuous and downtrodden emerged triumphant. In that melodrama focused on individual experience and not general social conditions, however, it was not politically subversive.

In his paper on phrenology, mesmerism, and spiritualism in the early and mid-Victorian period, Professor Harrison asserted that the main task of the historian is to recover the social and psychological significance of such phenomena, which were considerably more central to nineteenth-century English culture than most students of the Victorians have acknowledged. Professor Harrison concentrated on the many working-class political activists who, having committed themselves to Owenism or Chartism in the 1830s, took up phrenology, mesmerism, or spiritualism in the mid-Victorian decades. Offering a number of illustrative and richly illuminating case histories, he examined the attraction of these would-be sciences for men disillusioned by the failure of working-class radicalism. Phrenology and mesmerism, taken singly or together, seemed to promise the means to a more rational and progressive organization of society based on a scientific determination of the tendencies of

individual character. Spiritualism appealed to secular working-class radicals who had rejected orthodox Christianity yet looked for reassurance that there was life after death. Professor Harrison stressed the need to treat these matters seriously in order to achieve an understanding of the social, intellectual, and psychic environment inhabited by many who were part of the artisan elite.

BROAD CHURCH REACTIONS TO THE MANSEL CONTROVERSY

Bernard Lightman

Ever since their inauguration in 1780, the Bampton Lectures had succeeded in preserving their reputation for tedium. But when the Very Reverend Henry Longueville Mansel (1820-1871) delivered the lectures for 1858 he attracted to the Oxford University Church the largest congregation since the days of John Henry Newman.[1] *The Times* reported that "Sunday after Sunday, during the whole series, in spite of the natural craving for variety, and some almost tropical weather, there flocked to St. Mary's a large and continually increasing crowd of hearers to listen to discourses on the Absolute and the Infinite, which they confessedly could not comprehend."[2] Why were people filling St. Mary's every week to hear lectures on the esoteric topic *The Limits of Religious Thought*?[3] Mansel's audience believed that they were witnessing a devastating attack on that dreaded foe, religious scepticism, and that Mansel had utterly destroyed the enemy with his biting sarcasm and great learning.

A staunch Tory and a High Church Anglican, Mansel held a Readership in Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy at Oxford at the time of the lectures. In 1859 this readership became the first Waynflete Professorship. In 1866 Mansel was appointed to the Regius Professorship of Ecclesiastical History, but two years later he accepted the Deanery of St. Paul's. In addition to *The Limits of Religious Thought*, Mansel published a number of important books including *Prolegomena Logica* (1851), *Metaphysics* (1860), *The Philosophy of the Conditioned* (1866), and *The Gnostic Heresies* (1875). When Mansel began writing in the early fifties, Christian belief was on the defensive but not yet in retreat. By Mansel's death in 1871, however, English Christianity had been shaken by Darwin and the Broad Church's *Essays and Reviews*. Mansel, from the start, had seen the potential danger as coming from two sources. On the one hand, the Positivism of Comte's early thought seemed to Mansel to have crossed the Channel to join hands with a native empiricist and scientific spirit which culminated in an implicit atheism. Mansel was particularly hostile towards John Stuart Mill as the most eminent representative of this intellectual development. On the other hand, Mansel perceived a second threat to religion in the gradual permeation of English thought by German pantheism and Biblical Criticism. Broad Church Anglicanism and the

freethinking of men such as Francis W. Newman and W. R. Greg, whom Basil Willey refers to as "honest doubters" in his *More Nineteenth Century Studies*, embodied for Mansel a disturbing trend towards questioning from a rationalist perspective both the validity of institutionalized Christianity and the infallibility of the Bible. Mansel's response was similar to other orthodox reactions characterized by an emphasis on authority in the form of the Church or the Bible. Mansel shared the same aims as conservatives of this type, but his use of weapons borrowed from modern epistemologcial theory as a means to achieve these ends was a radical point of departure.

In the Bampton Lectures and throughout his career Mansel argued that limits to human thought, inherent in the very structure of the mind, do not allow man to know God. Mansel's intention was to demonstrate the impotence of reason in the realm of religion. Christianity is based on faith in God and not on reason's pretensions to transcendental insight. Therefore, Mansel concluded, man is in no position to criticize the Scriptures as they represent a communication from an infinite being (God) to a finite being (man). The infallibility of the Bible in all matters cannot be questioned. From this position Mansel could reject the standpoint of "honest doubters" like Francis Newman who cast doubt on Biblical infallibility by pointing to sections in the Scriptures which supposedly pictured God as condoning immoral acts. Mansel affirmed that man cannot fathom God, even morally. This gave rise to Mansel's distinction between speculative truth, or knowledge which contains full comprehension of God's inner being, and regulative truth, or principles which are meant only to guide human conduct. The images or symbols which God chooses to represent to man his incomprehensible nature in the Scriptures are those which satisfy man's spiritual needs and direct man's behaviour. At best, Mansel declared, revelation gave man only a regulative notion of God.

The radical nature of Mansel's argument in *The Limits of Religious Thought* provoked controversy which involved many of the important religious periodicals of the day and drew responses from such diverse thinkers as the Unitarian James Martineau, the High Churchman J. B. Mozley, the Scottish philosopher James McCosh, and two Catholic thinkers Charles Meynell and Richard Simpson.[4] Most scholarly work on the Mansel controversy has centred on the debate between Mansel and Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1872), the Chaplain of Lincoln's Inn and a Christian Socialist.[5] However, an examination of the reaction of the Broad Church to *The Limits of Religious Thought* reveals a great deal about the beliefs of the Broad Churchmen and their relation to Maurice. The Broad Churchmen, a minority within the Church of England, did not consider themselves as belonging to any particular party. This was due to their rejection of party spirit and the rigid dogmatism it entailed as well as their corresponding emphasis on national unity.[6] Although Bernard Reardon has suggested that Maurice's unconventionality placed him outside any school or party, his leadership of the liberal Anglican attack on Mansel demonstrates a definite affinity with the Broad Churchmen, who themselves were unconventional in working to counter the fragmentation of the Church into parties.[7] The Mansel controversy raised crucial questions concerning the knowableness of God, and had implications for

ethics and for the significance of revelation. In all these areas Maurice and Broad Churchmen found common cause. The Broad Churchmen perceived in Mansel's *Limits of Religious Thought* a direct attack on their fundamental convictions. Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, dean of Westminster for many years and referred to by Reardon as a "typical Broad Churchman,"[8] vehemently attacked Mansel.[9] Other prominent Broad Churchmen also rejected Mansel's approach to religious philosophy. Among them was Charles Kingsley who later wrote a letter to Maurice sympathizing with the latter's assault on Mansel.[10] Fenton John Anthony Hort, a theologian and Biblical scholar, also reviled Mansel's lectures. In 1858 he wrote to a friend concerning *The Limits of Religious Thought*: "I am also getting on with Mansel's book, comforting myself with the thought of what a very juiceless and indigestible morsel it must be to its orthodox admirers. Otherwise it is clear, vigorous, and not often unfair; only a big lie from beginning to end."[11] However, it was Frederick Denison Maurice who led the attack on Mansel.

Maurice and Mansel had crossed swords earlier over the notion of eternal punishment in Maurice's *Theological Essays*. In his *Man's Conception of Eternity* (1854), Mansel criticized Maurice for attempting to go beyond the limits of thought in conceiving of eternity as being a fixed state out of time. Basically, Mansel argued that the notion of eternal punishment was a regulative truth and that man could have no intuition of eternity in itself. Maurice responded in the preface to the second edition (1855) of *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament*, where he rejected Mansel's theory of regulative truth and asserted that the Bible "shows you the way to the knowledge of what you are, and of what God is."[12] Two years later, in a letter to a friend, Maurice explained that his recently published *Epistles of St. John* was aimed at Mansel:

> [The lectures on the Epistles of St. John] will put me in more direct antagonism with Mr. Mansel and his school than anything I have published yet; seeing that I maintain on St. John's authority—taking his words to mean what they say--not only that the knowledge of God is possible for men, but that it is the foundation of all knowledge of men and of things; that science is impossible altogether if He is excluded from the sphere of it. To meet the positivism of Comte in any other way than this seems to me idle and vain. Atheism is the only alternative for an age which demands science, if we cannot "know that we know" God, and if to know Him is not eternal life.[13]

Thus the basic positions of both Mansel and Maurice were expressed prior to the later controversy concerning the Bampton Lectures. Maurice had already recognized Mansel as the leader of a school of thought that directly opposed his notion of faith. Yet Maurice believed that Mansel's pamphlet on eternity was "quiet and gentlemanlike" and not a vicious attack like other responses to the *Theological Essays*. Maurice and Mansel apparently corresponded (or so Maurice says), and, despite the fundamental antagonism between

their religious viewpoints, the affair concluded on a not unfriendly note as Maurice related in a letter of 18 September 1857 to a friend:

> I judged from the allusions in it [Mansel's letter] to his University occupations and to the hopelessness of our ever understanding each other, that he wished me not to trouble him anymore; each of us has said his say; an accomplished Oxford logician of high reputation had surely done as much as could be expected from him (more than I expected) in stooping to notice a half fanatical mystic such as he takes me to be.[14]

Most likely, Maurice had all but forgotten about Henry Longueville Mansel during the remainder of the year. Early in 1858, however, Dr. Thomson, the future Archbishop of York, came to Lincoln's Inn to hear Maurice's sermon. Thomson had been attending Mansel's lectures and described them to Maurice as "the most unalloyed Atheism that had been heard in England for generations."[15] Mansel's reputation as an Oxford common-room wit and Thomson's belief that the lectures were popular because of their irreverence for all German and English thinkers who had honest religious doubts, convinced Maurice that the Bampton lectures were encouraging unthinking conservatives to laugh at those earnest seekers of truth.[16] Maurice's animosity towards Mansel undoubtedly increased when he perceived the very same religious press that had hounded him in 1853 for his *Theological Essays* embrace Mansel's *Limits of Religious Thought* wholeheartedly. Considering that Maurice lost his posts as Professor of English History and Literature and Professor of Theology at King's College, London, as a result of the 1853 controversy, it is not surprising that he was sensitive to the reactions of religious journals:

> The moment Mr. Mansel's Lectures appeared, they were welcomed by a great part of the religious press of the country as the academical defence of Christian truths. Such a recognition of a book which was in its nature scholastic by the unscholastic world, I do not think any of us have witnessed in our time.[17]

It is probable that this above all roused Maurice's anger. "If the religious world had not declared almost *en masse* in favour of Mansel," he stated in a letter dated 1859, "I would not have written against him."[18] Most historians (including Hall and Ramsey) agree with Reardon that this was "the bitterest controversy of his life."[19] Unfortunately, Maurice's rage prevented him from arguing calmly and effectively in his reply to Mansel, *What Is Revelation?* (1859). Mansel countered with *An Examination of the Rev. F. D. Maurice's Strictures on the Bampton Lectures of 1858* (1859), where he complained about Maurice's underhanded polemical devices and the hostile, sarcastic tone of *What Is Revelation?* "I am compelled in self-defence," Mansel declared, "to point out the existence, in Mr. Maurice's book, of a tissue of continuous misrepresentation, which I believe has no parallel in recent literature."[20] Mansel was incensed. While his earlier criticism of Maurice's position in *Man's Conception of Eternity* was respectful, *An Examination*

of the Rev. F. D. Maurice's Strictures was merciless, Mansel himself admitting a measure of discomfort about the adoption of a personal tone that he had "never assumed . . . before the present occasion."[21] Maurice felt compelled to answer Mansel's rebuttal, and did so in his *Sequel to the Inquiry, What Is Revelation?* (1860). Here it was Maurice who charged Mansel with unfair polemics. "The pages from 95 to 108 in Mr. Mansel's 'Examination' contain that sentence which I quoted in the first of these Letters," Maurice asserted, "wherein he gathers up all his charges against my book into a denunciation of it; as nearly unparalleled in English literature for unfairness and malignity."[22] The consensus among historians is that Maurice, hindered by his inability to control his wrath, was routed by Mansel.[23] The tone of the battle was so harsh that after Mansel's death in 1871 Maurice apologized for having lost his temper:

> As I had the misfortune, many years ago, in a book long forgotten, to enter into controversy with Dean Mansel, I am anxious to express my regret for any language that I may have used in the course of it, which, though nowise injurious to his reputation, may have given pain to some of his friends. His immeasurable superiority to me as a disputant deepens my conviction that the principle which I maintained against him was sound and true--one which even his ability and learning could not shake.[24]

But many historians have excused Maurice for his excessive anger on the grounds that Mansel's position struck at the core of one of Maurice's most cherished beliefs, that man was capable of attaining a living knowledge of God. It was against the religious philosophy given such formidable expression by Mansel that Maurice had been struggling throughout his life.[25]

Maurice and many Broad Churchmen believed that Mansel had destroyed faith by denying man any speculative knowledge of God. Hort indicated this in a letter of 1858: ". . . I know nothing about Mansel's lectures save from the *Guardian*. But he holds the doctrine of universal nescience more consciously and clearly than I suppose any other Englishman; a just Nemesis on Butler's probabilities! So perish all halfway houses!"[26] Richard Holt Hutton (1826-1897), theologian, journalist, and man of letters, was another Broad Churchman who believed that though man may not be able to construct a philosophy of the infinite, he yet has a faculty that enables him to discern God:

> Hence I entirely deny Dr. Mansel's assumption, that direct converse with God implies faculties for constructing "a theory" of God. This was the fundamental error of his work. He admits no knowledge except that which is on a level with its object. Nothing is easier than to prove that no plummet of human Reason can measure the depths of the divine mind; nothing falser than to suppose that this incapacity shuts us out entirely from that mind, and proves it to be the painted veil of "representative notions" of God, and not God Himself, who has filled our spirits in the act of worship.[27]

When this article was written, during the late fifties, Hutton was moving away from Unitarianism and towards the Broad Church under the influence of F. W. Robertson and Maurice.[28] Indeed, Hutton refers to Maurice in his review of *What Is Revelation?* in a tone of glowing praise, and agrees with Maurice that "we have lost our faith in God altogether when we have lost our faith in His direct presence with us."[29] The centre of Maurice's faith was grounded on the belief that God constantly revealed Himself in man's everyday life. To Maurice, this actual living knowledge of God was denied by Mansel's stress on the Bible as the chief source of man's knowledge of God. If there is no capacity for a real participation in God, Maurice asked, "is not the Universe emptied of its meaning and its glory?"[30] One can know God but not necessarily comprehend his mysterious nature:

> If "a direct faculty of religious knoweldge" means a faculty of knowing the Being in whom we live and move, as a child knows its father, then I think that such a knowledge is implied in the "Imitation of Christ," and in all writings of the same character, nay, more or less in all devotional writings whatsoever. If, on the other hand, by "direct faculty of religious knowledge," is meant a faculty by which the child comprehends the Father, the Finite the Infinite, most persons, of all schools, would in terms repel so monstrous a notion: while all of us are liable to fall into it, because all of us are tempted continually to make ourselves gods.[31]

The point at issue between Maurice and Mansel was the existence of a faculty of reason in man which supplied speculative knowledge of God. Whereas Mansel's empiricist epistemology led him to deny that such a faculty existed, Maurice believed that God spoke to man through his reason. While Mansel was busy proclaiming that reason is bound by the laws of logic, Maurice was convinced that "there [was] a region above logic,—a region not of shadows but of realities,--a region where all these relations which exist among us in imperfect forms have their archetypes; where the full meaning of them is satisfied."[32] *Fraser's Magazine*, a liberal journal with Broad Church connections, sided with Maurice in this debate. The anonymous author of an article on "Religious and Philosophical Guides: Mansel and Maurice," which appeared in 1859, was perceptive in pointing out that the "paramount question" between Mansel and Maurice was "whether anything can be really known that does not come into the sphere of logical conception; whether everything is a merely negative thought which is a negative in Logic."[33] In order to counter the whole thrust of Mansel's thought, Maurice argued that there was no separation between faith and reason. He suggested that reason "must be conversant with things in themselves, or (generally) with that which is,"[34] and simultaneously asserted that faith grasps "existence" or "that which is."[35] Mansel's notion of mere regulative truth was therefore rejected by Maurice.

The controversy with Mansel made Maurice even more aware of the unpopularity of his thought. In *What Is Revelation?* Maurice admitted that his view of religion was not "characteristic of England" and was "alien" to English national habits.[36] Maurice's stress on internal

evidences as more important than external evidences was out of step with the time.[37] He blamed the rise of English unbelief on too great a reliance on Paley's external evidences which proved an inadequate foundation for a living religious belief.[38] This was in contrast with Mansel's belief that the Victorian crisis of faith derived largely from the influence of German thought.[39] Throughout the controversy, Maurice fought hard to defend the German approach to theological issues against Mansel's attacks. The Broad Churchmen echoed this concern, for their school looked to Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Germany for intellectual sustenance. *Fraser's Magazine* protested that the interest in Mansel's lectures was due to "a vague aversion to all that is *German*, combined with an uncomfortable feeling that it can only be overcome by a master of all that is German."[40] It was Maurice's contention that in rejecting the German approach to religious thought, one was also destroying the faith of England:

> The German almost as naturally grasps at an idea of God in Himself; and feels that he must perish if he loses it. Set up the Relation against the Absolute; glorify our own dear English faith, because it is ours; insult the German for what seems to us the vagueness of his aspiration; and we undermine our own ground. Fatherhood in God becomes merely at last a figure of speech formed after the likeness of our own earthly Fatherhood; an "accommodation" which it is well for us to preserve, because it produces certain good results in our minds, but which very soon our English honesty will reject, as it must reject whatever is merely invented for such an end.[41]

Maurice was typical of the Broad Church in his great respect for Coleridge and German thinkers who stressed the close relation between reason and faith. Undoubtedly what appeared to be an enthusiastic reception of the Bampton Lectures by the Victorian religious world left Maurice and the Broad Churchmen with a sense of their intellectual isolation in a land where empiricism was immensely powerful.

The implication of Mansel's position for ethics was another area where both Maurice and the Broad Church found cause for common concern. Maurice felt that Mansel had destroyed traditional Christian ethics in his affirmation of man's inability either to know God or even to comprehend Divine morality. "In Religion, in Morals, in our daily business," Maurice declared, "in the care of our lives, in the exercise of our senses, all rules will be unpractical, insincere, deceitful, promising much, performing nothing, unless they can be referred to some principle which our conscience, heart, reason, confers as fixed, unchangeable, eternal."[42] Although Maurice touched on the danger to morality from Mansel's beliefs, it was Goldwin Smith (1823-1910) who developed this line of thought in a comprehensive fashion. Smith, then Regius professor of modern history at Oxford, was another Broad Churchman who engaged Mansel in controversy. In his *Lectures on the Study of Modern History*, Smith added a postscript attacking Mansel's Bampton Lectures. Mansel retaliated with *A Letter to Goldwin Smith Concerning His Postscript to His Lectures on the*

Study of History (1861). Smith responded with his *Defence of the Remarks Contained in the 'Postscript' Against Mr. Mansel's Letter to Mr. Goldwin Smith* and Mansel countered with *A Second Letter to Professor Goldwin Smith* (1862). Smith's concerns were similar to Maurice's. He too pointed to Coleridge as the anchor of English religion in the present time of crisis.[43] Also, Smith viewed reason as "the creation of God"[44] and asserted that if "there is no truth attainable by man but 'regulative truth,' there is no truth attainable by man at all."[45] However, Smith's prime interest was the consequence of Mansel's thought for Christian ethics. Smith contended that if human and divine morality were not identical, then the morality of God was unintelligible to man:

> Mr. Mansel, in his lectures, has arrived at the conclusion that "human morality, even in its highest elevation, is not identical with, nor adequate to measure, the Absolute Morality of God." I said and I adhere to the opinion, that if this be so, the "Morality of God" is an unmeaning phrase, or if it means anything, means the immorality of God: human morality and human immorality being the only two ideas which our minds can possibly express. That actions or sentiments which differ from our morality in the same moral matter are to us immoral, and that if we speak sincerely, we must call them so, is a position which, I apprehend, cannot easily be assailed.[46]

Pushed by Smith on this point, Mansel argued that there is still an "analogy between the Divine nature and the human; but that this analogy is not so complete as to enable us in all cases to judge of the actions of God as we should judge of the actions of men."[47] But Smith would not accept this and insisted that if human morality and divine morality were not identical, then human language breaks down and all talk of resemblance or analogy is groundless. Maurice was in complete agreement with Smith on this matter and asserted that "there is a divine standard for human morality" which is "in such direct affinity with humanity in its highest form, that the one is the exact reflex of the other."[48]

Both Maurice and Smith believed that Mansel's position presented grave problems for traditional Christian ethics. Smith argued that by denying the identity of human and divine morality, Mansel had cut away all arguments for the immortality of the soul which are based on divine justice. "If we know nothing of the absolute justice of God," Smith claimed, "What presumption is there that it will lead Him to redress the sufferings of the good in a future state of existence?"[49] Another Broad Churchman, Rowland Williams, criticized Mansel's lectures in a letter of 1858 for attempting to justify God's immoral actions in the Bible in order to uphold the doctrine of Biblical infallibility: "I think I could easily show the practical worthlessness of his book for the objects at which he aims, though many of his positions, if taken isolated, are undeniably true. . . . For the present, I call it a triumphant sophistry and a moral failure."[50] Williams later joined other Broad Churchmen in their attack on Biblical infallibility by contributing to *Essays and Reviews*. Maurice and most Broad Churchmen

would have agreed with Smith that the way out of such difficulties as the questionable morality in the Bible, moral evil, and physical evil was not to invent "a peculiar morality for God" and another morality for man.[51]

Linked to the attack on Mansel's ethical thought was an assault on another aspect of the Bampton lecturer's religious philosophy, his view of the type of knowledge of God found in the Bible. Maurice felt that Mansel "emasculated" the Bible, that he "must reduce it from a word of God into a collection of opinions—before it has any meaning for him."[52] Maurice believed that the Bible was a living power which no Biblical Criticism could touch. According to Maurice, man needs and wants a revelation that gives him a vision of the source of life. Thus the question of whether God has truly revealed Himself to man "is the question of questions for our generation."[53] While Mansel conceived of revelation as symbolic of the vast gap between God and man, Maurice perceived in the Bible the overcoming of the separation of the finite from the infinite. Christ, to Maurice, signified that man may "rise to a full knowledge" of God.[54] Maurice avowed that the Bible spoke of God as a person whom man can know. Further, we are also able to know an absolute morality through revelation. "What we have been taught in our creed is," Maurice asserted, "that because Absolute Morality could not be fixed in a human conception . . . it came forth in the life of a Person, in His acts, His sufferings."[55] The Broad Churchmen agreed with Maurice that Mansel's view of the Bible as containing regulative and not speculative truth destroyed the very notion of revelation. *Fraser's Magazine* contended that Mansel's regulative truths were an inadequate basis for morality:

> Did it never occur to Mr. Mansel that in the very act of proclaiming a truth to be merely regulative, and possibly, probably, quite different from the truth speculative of the matter, you deprive it of its regulative character? Whilst I believed certain words to tell me the truth, I could act upon them; they could regulate me. Let me learn that in all likelihood they are not the truth, nor near it; and it is difficult to imagine that they can have any large influence over me.[56]

If revelation was to reveal anything at all, whether God's real nature or absolute morality, it must contain speculative truths. Richard Holt Hutton echoes this criticism of "Dr. Mansel's interpretation of Revelation, as a message intended to regulate human practice without unfolding the realities of the divine mind."[57] Hutton conceived of revelation as God's method of educating the human race, for the Bible unveiled "the very character and life of the eternal God; and an unveiling, of course, to a nature which is capable of beholding him."[58] This was quite similar to Maurice's notion of the role of revelation in human history. Maurice affirmed that only on the supposition that the Bible reveals God's very nature can one view revelation as a Divine educative tool. To Maurice, Mansel's theory of revelation, which was grounded on authority, allowed no room for

the role of human experience in the revelation process.[59] Just as Maurice saw in reason a faculty which gave living knowledge of God (i.e., knowledge revealed in everyday life), he also thought of revelation as presenting a conception of God revealing Himself to men in and through their own experiences. Maurice stated that the Bible is "an interpreter of the problems of personal life" and that through this process the Bible gives "purpose" to life.[60] Maurice's commitment to this deeply personal view of revelation explains why he felt so threatened by Mansel's seemingly scholastic and lifeless theory of regulative truth. And the Broad Church thinkers basically agreed with Maurice, even though the latter did not share many of the Broad Churchmen's interest in Biblical Criticism.

The Broad Churchmen did not fail to perceive the overall thrust of Mansel's thought. They realized that in addition to a defence of the doctrine of Biblical infallibility, Mansel's religious philosophy was designed to protect the conservative, High Church outlook. Goldwin Smith saw in Mansel the orthodox reactionary who was guarding the establishment from attack by fettering the free discussion of religious thought. Similarly, Maurice asserted that Mansel was not trying to awaken a sense of mystery in his hearers "of that I which each one of them is and must be through ages upon ages."[61] Instead, Maurice claimed, Mansel was attempting "to prevent all inquiries of this kind; precisely to show these young men that they must not trouble themselves about that which is; that they can have no acquaintance except with phenomena or appearances;--it is for this end that the Bampton Lectures were delivered."[62] Maurice thus complained that Mansel's lectures would be "effectual for crushing the questions that have arisen or may arise in your own mind."[63] *The Limits of Religious Thought* was, to Maurice, an encouragement to intellectual laziness:

> I believe that among Mr. Mansel's auditors there will have been not a few on whom his words will have acted as a most soothing lullaby; who will have wrapped themselves in comfortable thankfulness that they were not Rationalists, Spiritualists, or even as that German; who will have rejoiced to think that they did not trouble themselves about eternal things which are out of men's reach, like Puritans and Methodists; who will proclaim that they accept Christianity in the lump, and so are not impeded by any of its little details in thinking and doing what they list. Such men, I believe, do more to lower the moral tone and moral practice of England than all sceptics and infidels together.[64]

By placing God so far beyond and above man, Mansel, in Maurice's eyes, had taken the striving out of faith and allowed many to be satisfied with a stale orthodoxy. The critic in *Fraser's Magazine* agreed that Mansel had destroyed the search for real truth by making it unattainable. Although he granted Mansel the point that man has limits, the reviewer nevertheless asserted that man is slowly but surely progressing nearer to speculative truth and therefore need not unquestioningly accept conservative dogma.[65]

While criticizing Mansel for his conservativism, Broad Churchmen also condemned him for his implicit materialism, atheism, and scepticism. The reviewer in *Fraser's Magazine* referred to Mansel's system as "an orthodoxy based upon scepticism: an enforcement of the whole of a received system on the special ground that our ignorance of all things disqualified us to refute, and therefore disentitles us to reject, any part of it."[66] Goldwin Smith asserted that Mansel's philosophy consistently led to atheism. Smith claimed that Mansel had unconsciously proved the validity of rational religion "by showing that an irrational theory of religion logically tends to atheism; and that man must use the reason which God has given him in order to attain the knowledge of God."[67] Further, Smith stated that even materialists, such as Herbert Spencer, were critical of the absolute negative quality of Mansel's lectures:

> Again, when we are told (p. 144) [of *The Limits of Religious Thought*] in regard to our capability of knowing God, that "we behold effects only, and not causes," the natural import of this expression surely is, that we are cognizant of creation only, not of a Creator. I do not wonder that materialists should have received these lectures with approbation, as well as Bishops. It is to blank materialism and empiricism that such reasonings inevitably lead.[68]

However, it was again Maurice who led the way for the Broad Churchmen. He was the first to point out that "the confirmed, self-satisfied atheist is the one person who can receive such tidings without a protest, with perfect complacency."[69] The Broad Churchmen agreed that Mansel's epistemology was empiricist (and thus belonged to the English empiricist tradition of Locke, Hume, and Bentham) which logically led to atheism, scepticism, and materialism, despite the fact that Mansel was drawing from this tradition in order to defend religion. This was a perceptive point as it revealed a fear that Mansel's epistemology could be used by others to attack religion. Maurice's son later wrote in 1884 that his father's assertion that "the weapon forged in behalf of orthodoxy will become a deadly one in quite other hands" had been vindicated by the rise of agnosticism.[70]

Mansel's attempt to defend the doctrine of Scriptural infallibility by rejecting the possibility of speculative knowledge of God drew similar responses from Maurice and the Broad Church. Both perceived Mansel's position as one which destroyed Christianity's stress on a direct relation between man and God. By depriving man of transcendental knowledge Mansel had, in their minds, transformed a living God into One who was wholly other, morally unfathomable and concealed, rather than revealed, in the Bible. The controversy with Mansel also led to a heightened awareness on the part of Maurice and the Broad Church of their ties to the Coleridgean-Germanic tradition and the corresponding painful realization that this isolated them from the rest of the English religious world. Outside of the Broad Churchmen, only James Martineau, the Unitarian leader and teacher, attacked Mansel vehemently without displaying an open hostility towards Maurice's transcendentalism.[71] Besides pointing to the close

ties between Maurice and the Broad Church, the Mansel controversy is significant in that Maurice's worst fears about the impact of Mansel's thought were justified. We are all too familiar with that cast of mind which is both conservative and sceptical: the flabby, complacent agnosticism of our modern world which ceases to question, and rationalizes this stance by pointing to the inability of man to possess transcendental insight.

NOTES

[1]Don Cupitt, "Mansel and Maurice on Our Knowledge of God," *Theology*, 73 (July 1970), 302.

[2]"Mansel's Bampton Lectures," *The Times*, 10 January 1859, p. 10.

[3]Mansel published the Bampton Lectures under the title *The Limits of Religious Thought*. Two editions appeared in 1858, two more in 1859, and a fifth was published in 1867.

[4]For a full listing and discussion see Bernard Lightman, *Henry Longueville Mansel and the Genesis of Victorian Agnosticism* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1979), pp. 160-228, 476-80.

[5]Don Cupitt, "Mansel and Maurice on Our Knowledge of God," pp. 301-11; R. V. Sampson, "The Limits of Religious Thought: The Theological Controversy," in *1859: Entering an Age of Crisis*, ed. Philip Appleman, William A. Madden, and Michael Wolff (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), pp. 63-80; Arthur Michael Ramsey, "Maurice and Mansel," in his *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), pp. 72-81; most books on Mansel and Maurice contain sections on the controversy as well.

[6]Richard Helmstadter, "The Victorian Churches," in *Victorian Prose*, ed. David J. DeLaura (New York: Modern Language Association, 1973), p. 402.

[7]Bernard Reardon, *From Coleridge to Gore* (London: Longman Group, 1971), p. 164.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 245.

[9]Frederick Maurice, ed., *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1884), II, 340.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 498.

[11]Arthur Fenton Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1896), p. 402.

[12]Frederick Denison Maurice, *The Patriarchs and Lawgivers of the Old Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1867), p. vi.

[13]Maurice, ed., *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*, II, 311.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 311.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 333. There is some question as to whether Thomson really said this. See Sampson, p. 75.

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 334.

[17]Frederick Denison Maurice, *Sequel to the Inquiry, What Is Revelation?* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1860), p. 20.

[18]Maurice, ed., *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*, II, 349.

[19]Reardon, *From Coleridge to Gore*, p. 224; Ramsey, *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*, p. 75; Robert Tom Hall, *The Unity*

of Philosophy, Theology, and Ethics in the Thought of Frederick Denison Maurice (Ann Arbor: Mich: University Microfilms, 1967), p. 39.

[20]Henry Longueville Mansel, *An Examination of the Rev. F. D. Maurice's Strictures on the Bampton Lectures of 1858* (London: John Murray, 1859), p. 4.

[21]*Ibid.*, p. 201.

[22]Maurice, *Sequel to the Inquiry*, p. 289.

[23]Reardon, *From Coleridge to Gore*, p. 224; Ramsey, *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*, p. 75.

[24]Frederick Denison Maurice, *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1890), I, xlii.

[25]Maurice, ed., *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*, II, 332.

[26]Hort, *Life and Letters*, I, 398.

[27]Richard Holt Hutton, "What Is Revelation?" in his *Essays, Theological and Literary* (London: Dalby, Isbister and Co., 1877), I, 82.

[28]"Hutton, Richard Holt," in *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1956-60), XXII, 892.

[29]Hutton, "What Is Revelation?" p. 94.

[30]Maurice, *Sequel to the Inquiry*, p. 296.

[31]*Ibid.*, p. 47.

[32]Frederick Denison Maurice, *What Is Revelation?* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1859).

[33]F. G., "Religious and Philosophical Guides: Mansel and Maurice," *Fraser's Magazine*, 60 (Nov. 1859), 570. In his *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* Walter Houghton suggests that F. G. may be Francis Garden (1810-1884), theologian and Broad Churchman, who was greatly influenced by Maurice. However, since Houghton indicates uncertainty as to the validity of his identification of Garden as the author I will refer to the piece as an anonymous article.

[34]Maurice, *What Is Revelation?*, p. 341.

[35]*Ibid.*, p. 358.

[36]*Ibid.*, p. 386.

[37]*Ibid.*, p. 457.

[38]*Ibid.*, p. 454.

[39]*Ibid.*, p. 382.

[40]F. G., "Religious and Philosophical Guides," p. 564.

[41]Maurice, *Sequel to the Inquiry*, p. 101.

[42]Maurice, *What Is Revelation?*, p. 328.

[43]Goldwin Smith, *Rational Religion, and the Rationalistic Objections of the Bampton Lectures for 1858* (Oxford: Wheeler, 1861), p. 77.

[44]*Ibid.*, p. 141.

[45]*Ibid.*, p. 4.

[46]*Ibid.*, p. 29.

[47]Henry Longueville Mansel, *A Second Letter to Professor Goldwin Smith* (Oxford: Hammans, 1862), p. 44.

[48]Maurice, *What Is Revelation?*, p. 399.

[49]Smith, *Rational Religion*, p. 3.

[50]Mrs. Rowland Williams, ed., *The Life and Letters of Rowland Williams, D.D.* (London: King, 1874), p. 406.
[51]Smith, *Rational Religion*, p. 59.
[52]Maurice, *What Is Revelation?*, p. 479.
[53]Maurice, *Sequel to the Inquiry*, p. 293.
[54]Maurice, *What Is Revelation?*, p. 233.
[55]*Ibid.*, p. 402.
[56]F. G., "Religious and Philosophical Guides," p. 573.
[57]Hutton, "What Is Revelation?" p. 97.
[58]*Ibid.*, p. 98.
[59]Hall, *The Unity of Philosophy, Theology, and Ethics*, p. 41.
[60]Maurice, *What Is Revelation?*, p. 456.
[61]*Ibid.*, p. 330.
[62]*Ibid.*, p. 331.
[63]*Ibid.*, p. 131.
[64]*Ibid.*, p. 372.
[65]F. G., "Religious and Philosophical Guides," p. 574.
[66]*Ibid.*, p. 575.
[67]Smith, *Rational Religion*, p. xii.
[68]*Ibid.*, p. 10.
[69]Maurice, *What Is Revelation?*, p. 389.
[70]Maurice, ed., *Life of Frederick Denison Maurice*, II, 336.
[71]Lightman, *Henry Longueville Mansel*, p. 207; James Martineau, "Mansel's Limits of Religious Thought," *National Review* (London), 15 (Jan. 1859), 209-227, rpt. in his *Essays, Philosophical and Theological* (New York: Holt, 1870), I, 213-43.

BOOK REVIEW

Thomas De Quincey: The Prose of Vision. By V. A. De Luca. Toronto, London, Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1980. Pp. xvii + 168.

Professor De Luca surveys a narrow but highly important segment of De Quincey's large output, the works, indeed, by which he is most likely to be remembered. Chapter 1 draws largely on a juvenile diary, illustrating the young De Quincey's facility for spinning visions or visionary narrative fragments. Chapter 2 deals with the early (1822) *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*; Chapter 3 with De Quincey's notion of power as a quality of literature, with the essay on *Macbeth* and comparable or more bizarre speculations on murder, and with some Gothic tales, all bearing on or demonstrating the concept of power. Chapter 4 is concerned with *Suspiria de Profundis*, Chapter 5 with *The English Mail Coach* and related works, Chapter 6 mainly with the revised and enlarged *Confessions*. A brief Epilogue surveys "De Quincey's Place in the Romantic Tradition."

Professor De Luca is aware that his author is one of those who sometimes fall short of complete mastery, and this is perhaps most evident in his chapter on *Suspiria de Profundis*, a work full of

impressive passages, but lacking in form, incomplete, and eventually unsatisfying. The later pages of the chapter concede as much; but I find this the weakest section of the book, mainly, I believe, because Professor De Luca is zealous in expounding a work which is, overall, a failure. Much more successful are the two chapters on the *Confessions*, and that on *The English Mail Coach.* The second on the *Confessions* is especially persuasive on the virtues of the later text as compared with the earlier, and on the skill with which De Quincey grafted his additional matter on to the original text. Those firmly committed to the text of 1822 may not be moved by Professor De Luca's careful discussion; I find it convincing. Of particular interest in the chapter on *The English Mail Coach* is the stress on the paradox of De Quincey's optimistic views about the advance of technology, especially in Britain, in his time, and his complementary mistrust of the power implicit in this advance.

The last point bears on a serious omission from the early pages of Chapter 3, on "Modes of Power," arising from the failure to take account of the footnote to the passage cited on pp. 36-37, in which De Quincey acknowledges his "obligations to many years' conversation with Mr. Wordsworth" (Masson, X, 48). Had Professor De Luca explored Wordsworth's main exposition of the concept of power in literature, in the "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" of 1815 (rather than the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* which he cites, 154), he would have found there, perhaps not illumination, but at least confirmation, of the ambiguous status of the notion of power in the shared aesthetics of Wordsworth and De Quincey which puzzles him: "Of the two paragraphs quoted . . ., the first concerns power as a 'conscious living possession' of the individual reader, a subjective awakening to vitality, whereas the second concerns power as something contained within and reverberating out of the literary works themselves. . . . Power leaps unpredictably from cosmos to self or the other way round, sometimes assuming overwhelming forms from without, sometimes flowing from within as a benign gift of self-possession and control over one's environment" (38-39). Wordsworth's Essay speaks of "a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader"; the great poet "has to call forth [from the reader] and to communicate [to the reader] *power* . . . to call forth and bestow power." His prose fragment on the Sublime and Beautiful urges (as did Burke) that power is a characteristic of the sublime; and that the power of the sublime object either imparts a corresponding power to the observer's mind or produces "humiliation or prostration of the mind" before the object: both characteristics of De Quincey's reaction to aspects of power in life or in dreams: "the twin themes of power as attraction and as threat," as Professor De Luca puts it (99), without making the connections with De Quincey's antecedents just indicated. Some tightening of the structure of his book would have been achieved if they had been made, here and elsewhere.

Like other recent books in this field from Toronto, Professor De Luca's is elegantly produced, though the printer has retained a dozen or so misprints, including the omission of a line of type from p. 10.

The printer is not, however, responsible for the rather wearisome repetition of the word "experiential," nor for making De Quincey a correspondent of Nancy Mitford (89), rather than of his contemporary Mary Russell Mitford.

W. J. B. Owen
McMaster University